

Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

"BEAUTIFUL HOUSES."*

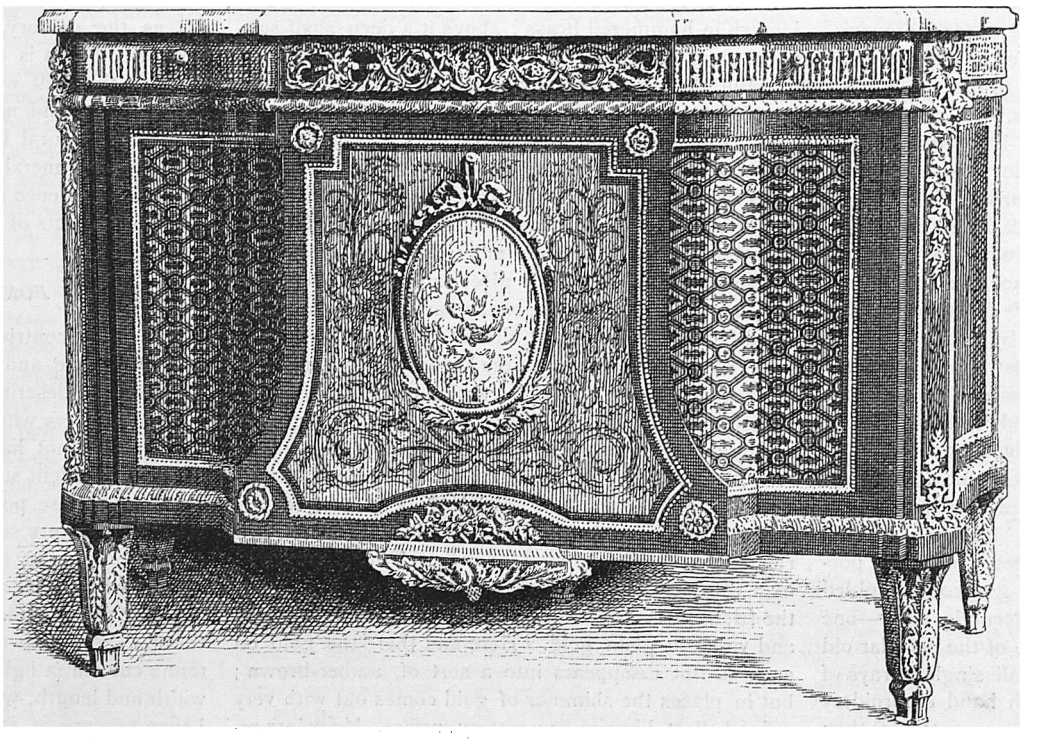
THE twelve houses described in the dainty little volume before us have been selected by Mrs. Haweis, we presume, for the varieties of taste they exemplify and the interest attaching to the personality of their owners, rather than because each is to be especially commended from an artistic standpoint. The descriptions of Sir Frederick Leighton's, Mr. Alma-Tadema's, and Mr. George H. Boughton's do not disappoint us. They set before the reader just such homes as one might imagine to belong to those painters, although we venture to suggest that perhaps justice has hardly been done in the description of Mr. Alma-Tadema's wondrous little retreat in the neighborhood of Regent's Park.

The mediæval house of the late William Burges, a clever architect and decorator, would seem to have been built rather to show his clever conceits and what might be done under his direction by a lavish expenditure of money than for the comfort of the family, which, we venture to think, should receive some consideration in the home. Everywhere there is glare and magnificence. Even "the library, dedicated to the arts and sciences, is a blaze of gold and color." And the bedrooms! "What bedrooms!" exclaims our author in admiration. "What bedrooms!" we echo with any but such a feeling. Here is the description: "The guest-chamber is made of fire and flowers. That is to say, the bed, the toilet-table, washstand, cabinet are all plain gold. The shutters are plain gold. The windows glow with colors such as the Alhambra was. Through Moorish trellis-work these colors shine, the subjects being only visible by scrutiny. What is not pure gold is crystal; the knobs on the bedposts, the shelves of the tables, scintillate with facets. The whole room is like an ancient shrine or reliquaire. The walls are painted with a deep frieze of flowers, growing 'au naturel,' which relieves the mass of gold by myriad tints." And what does the reader think of a bedroom "almost wholly scarlet" with "a cornice of conventional waves full of life-size fishes, which in some places are almost deceptive in glitter," with sirens combing their yellow hair over the fireplace, and a scarlet bed with "The Sleeping Beauty" daintily painted on the head-piece? Mrs. Haweis says this latter charming production "rooted her to the spot." Altogether she finds the Burges house, "with all its eccentricities, a beautiful and pleasing habitation," although she does admit that "there is always room for criticism" and perhaps "here is a little too much color or condensed subject." We should say so!

The house of Mr. Alfred Morrison in Carlton House Terrace, in London, must be a wonderful place indeed, judging from the description. We confess that we do not know who the gentleman is. We guess from his tastes that he must be a retired dealer in laces, embroideries, old china, and the like, with considerable goods left upon his hands: "The library, remarkable as containing no books, is a museum of interest by reason of its cases of rare Roman and Phœnician glass and porcelain. Here we enter upon the superb collection of antique embroideries which gives a character to the whole house—embroideries from Spain, Italy and the Orient; some of immense age, all beautiful, the meaner kind startling us on every table, stool and couch, the finest framed and glazed on the walls. The original wall hangings are chiefly in silk, all handsome and rather conspicuous in design, like the marquetry, and here and there they do not form a good background to what overhangs, besides being themselves hidden; but the framed embroideries alone would fill several large rooms, and it is infinitely better to be able to see them at a glance than to pull them in and out of closets." Perhaps so. But is it necessary to turn a library into an exhibition of decorative needlework? The walls of the dining-room are "covered with Indian shawls and ancient brocades of immense value." The tea-room is given up to laces, of which Mr. Morrison seems to have a very fine stock. Any quantity of them are "hidden away in coffers of mother-o'-pearl, silver and carved cedar which stand under every cabinet and table," and "the mantelpiece, curtains, and even the mirror, are edged with exquisitely perfect rose point," which Mrs. Haweis truly says "will soon decay under the influence of London blacks and London washing powders." Such pieces as are judged worth framing and glazing are suspended on the walls. In fine, we are told that this "tea-room" is "a little room, choked by lace, old Oriental plates and vases, and cabinets of Boule work in silver and tortoise-shell, and Oriental ivory gilt in lace-like patterns."

The boudoir is similar, with more lace, more embroideries, covering every vacant space, and themselves covered with pots and ornaments, ivories and bronzes, some of great age, some modern. The drawing-room repeats the same story. Mrs. Morrison's private sitting-room is on the same floor. The embroideries still smother the couches and tables: "In the corners stand tall storks of cloisonné, about four feet high, and beautiful in color; various coffers and chests, which may contain part of Mrs. Morrison's fine collection of jewels, glimmer from beneath the inlaid tables of ebony and ivory. One of the most curious features of the house — an enormous cabinet, filled with a pretentious service of Minton's ware—occupies one wall of the room."

The town and the country house of Mr. Reuben Sassoon, a very rich East Indian merchant, are described. Why we know not, for little is mentioned in either worthy of commendation, and there is much to condemn. The Belgrave mansion



COMMODE BELONGING TO MARIE ANTOINETTE. BY RIESENER.

IN THE LATE HAMILTON COLLECTION. (SEE PAGE 99.)



WRITING-TABLE BELONGING TO MARIE ANTOINETTE. BY RIESENER.

IN THE LATE HAMILTON COLLECTION. (SEE PAGE 99.)

* Beautiful Houses: Being a Description of certain well-known Artistic Houses. By Mrs. Haweis. New York: Scribner & Welford.

certainly must be very magnificent; but a person of taste, we should imagine, would hardly care to live in it. "The staircase winds past huge sheets of looking-glass to the drawing-rooms—a suite of three large rooms. The coloring of the first—if it can be said to have any definite coloring where the colors are so many—is old-gold mainly; the ceiling is painted to represent the sky, with clouds and birds. The second drawing-room is warmer in tone; and the third chiefly sky-blue, with doors painted in various blues to imitate mother-o'-pearl inlaying in floriated patterns." This imitation mother-o'-pearl in the town house is rivalled at the Sassoon country-seat—a fine old Tudor mansion bought of Sir Henry Fletcher—by the "*graining*" of the fine old carved oak panels. Graining oak to imitate oak!

To return to the three drawing-rooms, which open by the way on a broad paved space, designed for a skating-rink, and set with flowers: "The chief characteristic in all these rooms is formed by various Chinese and Japanese embroideries of the costliest description, but mostly modern, of which Mr. Sassoon has quite a collection. Screens, covered, painted, embroidered in gold, and the usual tropical birds, abound in all corners; white storks and peacocks plume themselves on every side. Every stool, ottoman, table, glimmers with raised gold work on the new 'high-art' plushes and velvets; but the finest specimens form the portières, which are large, heavy, and gorgeous, doubled at every door, and certainly magnificent in color—one in particular, a real old Chinese silk, of the peculiar old Imperial yellow, embroidered in small single sprays of brilliant flowers, liker to old English hand embroidery (which probably was taken from Eastern patterns) than to the florid designs most common in Japanese and Chinese art. The window curtains are mostly light blue satin and white lace. Over the doors rise panels containing pictures of the Watteau school. All the details of furniture, fenders, woodwork, knicknacks, though palpably costly, are of the ordinary London kind. Only one or two very fine old Chinese lacquer cabinets, some of the hangings and a few great clocks and candelabra of Empire date are not modern. The upper rooms are furnished after the same manner: the chief bedroom in light blue satin and white lace." The most praiseworthy features in this magnificent abode of wealth and bad taste are a prodigality of bath-rooms on every floor, and of elevators for saving the servants trouble. There is one elevator for the horses, of which "eighteen or twenty of every size, shape and color," are stabled on the top of the house.

Perhaps the most interesting house described in the volume is the domicile of Miss Hozier, which the skill of the clever architect, Mr. William Wallace, would seem to have converted into a Liliputian paradise. Very pleasant it is to turn from the garish splendor of the Sassoon mansion and the Morrison "old curiosity shop" to the snug little home with an account of which Mrs. Haweis closes her book. The description is not long, and we give it almost entire:

"A very little door opens into a very little hall. The street door and the little half-doors within are made 'thorow-shining' with tinted quarry glass, which lightens the passage. What was once the 'front dining-room' door has been sealed up, and the small niche gained is utilized as a pretty nest for umbrellas. A tiny table accommodates the cards of visitors, and then at once begin the stairs, full face. How disagreeable a small flight of stairs facing us can be we all know; we would rather not be reminded. This flight has become an ornament. Instead of a strip of the very narrowest carpeting, which might have shown a few inches of painted wood on either side, every inch of the stairs' width is covered with Scinde rugs sewn together, forming a very pleasant velvety bed. The flat rods of shining brass relieve the somewhat murky red, and the wall is maroon, passing into terra-cotta color, and finally into an antique blue, in horizontal stages.

"At the turn of the stairs an ugly niche has been converted into a very elegant cabinet for English china. The woodwork is treated in the Japanese fashion as to shelves, but some of the close perforating is rather Moorish than Tartar. It is of well-fitted solid walnut, and is backed with Japanese leather paper.

"The ordinary little mean staircase window has become a tempting seat, fitted with brown satin cushions, the sides and upper part being lined with old oak carvings of Italian origin. The window has been slightly thrown out, and the glass concealing the outside 'leads' has butterflies and birds irregularly dotting the quarries.

"Then comes one of the most ingenious features. Where the narrow stairs ascend to the drawing-room doors, Scinde rugs and soft-colored paint have formed a narrow, bright-colored alley, closed at the end by a big mirror, that of course deceives the eye as to the extent of the vista, and in which you get a complete reflection of the said bay-window. Before it hangs a fine lantern in hammered brass; above it a deep shelf supports more china.

"But the alley by no means leads to the drawing-room. A sort of passage has been built out over the leads, supported on iron pillars, and this forms the very quaintest introduction to the drawing-room, through glass doors which once formed the back windows. This charming détour ascends two steps, carpeted with Eastern webs, under an archway painted in two delicate and transparent yellows, which give the eye precisely that refreshing 'fillip' which a sharp flavor gives the palate sated for the moment with a rich taste.

"The yellow here strikes the keynote of the drawing-room (once two tiny cells), which, without being a yellow room, has yellow like a resonant echo sounding through all the other colors. The ceiling is papered with a very small pattern, amber on white, so small that at a distance it presents only a general creamy ground, with a sort of 'texture' in the cream, like rough drawing-paper stippled over. This is bounded by a very deep frieze (a bold stroke in so small a room), the frieze being cream with an Adams pattern, swags and vases in plain gold. Here and there the gold on such a tint disappears into a sort of amber-brown; but in places the shimmer of gold comes out with very refined effect, like sun on a watery surface. No colors relieve either the gold or the cream. The wall is papered with a more pronounced amber in geometric pattern, and the chintz upon the chairs and corner settees is undeniably yellow, the two tints seen in a daffodil. These gradations of tone form a very sweet harmony, and are relieved by the blue Persian carpets, and by the bluish fringe, two feet deep, which conceals the mantel-shelf, and the darker velvet that disguises the jambs. Pretty cassones and cabinets of fine old work, such as ebony and silver, old marquetry, and Spanish leather, but all conveniently tiny, mark the angles of the room, and give a soft note here, a strong one there, as is meet and right. Kelims and other Eastern portières shield the glazed doors and the windows. A gorgeous stool, covered with gold embroidery on orange silk, is redoubled in the narrow mirror dividing the windows.

"A mirror of seventeenth-century work hangs on the wall, and various Chelsea knicknacks on the broad mantel-shelf crowd beneath a looking-glass of really fine eighteenth-century pseudo-classic design, inclosing a painting in dark hues like old leather, representing Phaeton.

"The upper rooms having been surveyed with pleasure—for the whole house is of a piece, with delicately colored woodwork and carpets—we descend along the mysterious alley before noted to the dining-room and library. What good taste has done with the two little back and front parlors is a marvel.

"One of the two orthodox fireplaces has been done away with, only that in the forepart of the room retained. It is now a fine point of interest; the mantel-piece itself being an old stone one, nearly flat, and, though narrow, running up the whole wall. It encrusts several very fine Persian tiles, whose lovely purples relieve the gray stone; in the centre a golden mosaic, surrounded with onyx balls, is let in.

"The ceiling of this room is blue (from which hangs a fine brazen sepulchre lamp, with repoussé cherubim and twisted brass ribbons), and it is divided from a dull red wall by a frieze two feet deep of Japanese leather paper, cut into panels by Japanese mouldings of thin dark wood. An Empire convex mirror, above the Chippendale sideboard at the farthest end of the room, contributes a point of moving light. The door is painted in a dice-like pattern, somewhat Egyptian, and gives a point of interest, as a cabinet does.

"A snuggery opens at the hall's end, of which the soft bright decoration shines through the unclosed door with as quaint an effect as the distant vista in an old Dutch picture, say by Van der Meer or Delft. This is the library; and the eye is refreshed on entering from the Scinde-rugged stairs by a high blue dado, with a frieze so deep that it covers one third of the wall. The frieze is papered cream in a fine sunflower pattern. A ledge between it and the blue affords a resting-place for a fine collection of broad plates. The ceiling—Mr. Wallace has always recognized the artistic propriety of coloring ceilings—is yellow. The mantel-piece, of Adams design, is surmounted by a Queen Anne divided mirror, of simplest shape, in an oblong frame; the grate is set in Dutch tiles. Kelims, dhurries, and other foreign hangings give a comfortable look to doors and tables, and the chairs, which are mostly about as old as the century, are covered with good Morris chintzes. What is chiefly remarkable about this bijou house is the skill with which every inch of room has been utilized and made to look like two inches, and the bad structural features treated so as to help, not damage, the general effect; and this can only be done by great experience and knowledge of the receding and projecting effects of certain colors."

HINTS FOR THE DRESSING ROOM.

SOME little contrivances which have added much to the appearance and comfort of the dressing-room of the lady who describes them are thus set forth for the benefit of others who may like to adopt them: "When a room does not happen to contain a hanging wardrobe, an excellent substitute may be effected by means of a set of those portable folding pegs, which can be bought for a very small sum, fastened to the wall by strong nails. But dresses and cloaks are not sightly objects when hung up; and if not covered, they catch the dust in a manner very detrimental to their preservation. So I have adopted the plan of making a cretonne curtain (a light ground is the best) the required width and length, with several curtain rings at the top. I then procure at any hardware dealer's two of those little brass hooks to screw into the wall, which are used for hanging up cups in china closets—the largest size of these—and a strong piece of cane about three-quarters of a yard long. I screw in the hooks just over my pegs, run the cane through the curtain rings and fasten it up, the two hooks supporting each end. Thus a portable hanging wardrobe is at once made, and when the room is swept nothing need be done save to turn the flowing curtain inside out and pin it tightly round the dresses underneath it. When there are pegs behind the door the same sort of curtain can be put up and has all the appearance of a portière. The cretonne should match the window curtains and harmonize as much as possible with the shade of the carpet and the whole tone of the room. Boxes and trunks, which never look well in a bedroom in their natural state, may be converted into ottomans by cretonne covers, made to fit loosely and take off and on. A flat piece lined for the top of the box, a piping cord round, and a loose flounce gathered on is the best way to make them. And when curtains, box covers, portière, and hanging wardrobes are all made of the same pretty light cretonne to match, the effect is very good. When 'doing up' a bedroom it is well to buy as many yards of cretonne as you are likely to want at first, in case of not being afterwards able to match the pattern. Nothing looks worse than a 'patchy' room, and the idea should be fully carried out or not attempted at all."

HARMONY IN HOME DECORATION.

THERE are special rules for decorating different rooms to make them exactly suitable to their particular uses; thus, the entrance-hall or reception-room should be grand and imposing, calculated to instill into the visitor a sense of the mansion's importance. The dining-room should be just opposite in effect to the entrance hall. As a rule, dining-rooms are quiet and subdued in tone, for in this room the special attraction ought to lie in the repast upon the table, not in startling forms of decoration and furniture. It is not pleasant to have the attention rivetted by some example of decorative skill when the mind should be devoted to the consumption of the viands on the table. But by all means let the drawing-room be bright and cheerful. The character of this room ought to be such as will tend to promote pleasurable conversation, and this is fostered by the little odd but often expensive trifles, drawings, and articles of virtu, scattered about the room. If the walls are covered with paper let it be light (for no dark paper is suited to such a room) and of a color and pattern most adapted to show off any pictures or engravings that may be upon the walls, for if good pictures are hung upon a wall covered with an unsuitable paper their beauty will be lost, and most likely be passed by unnoticed; whereas, if they be